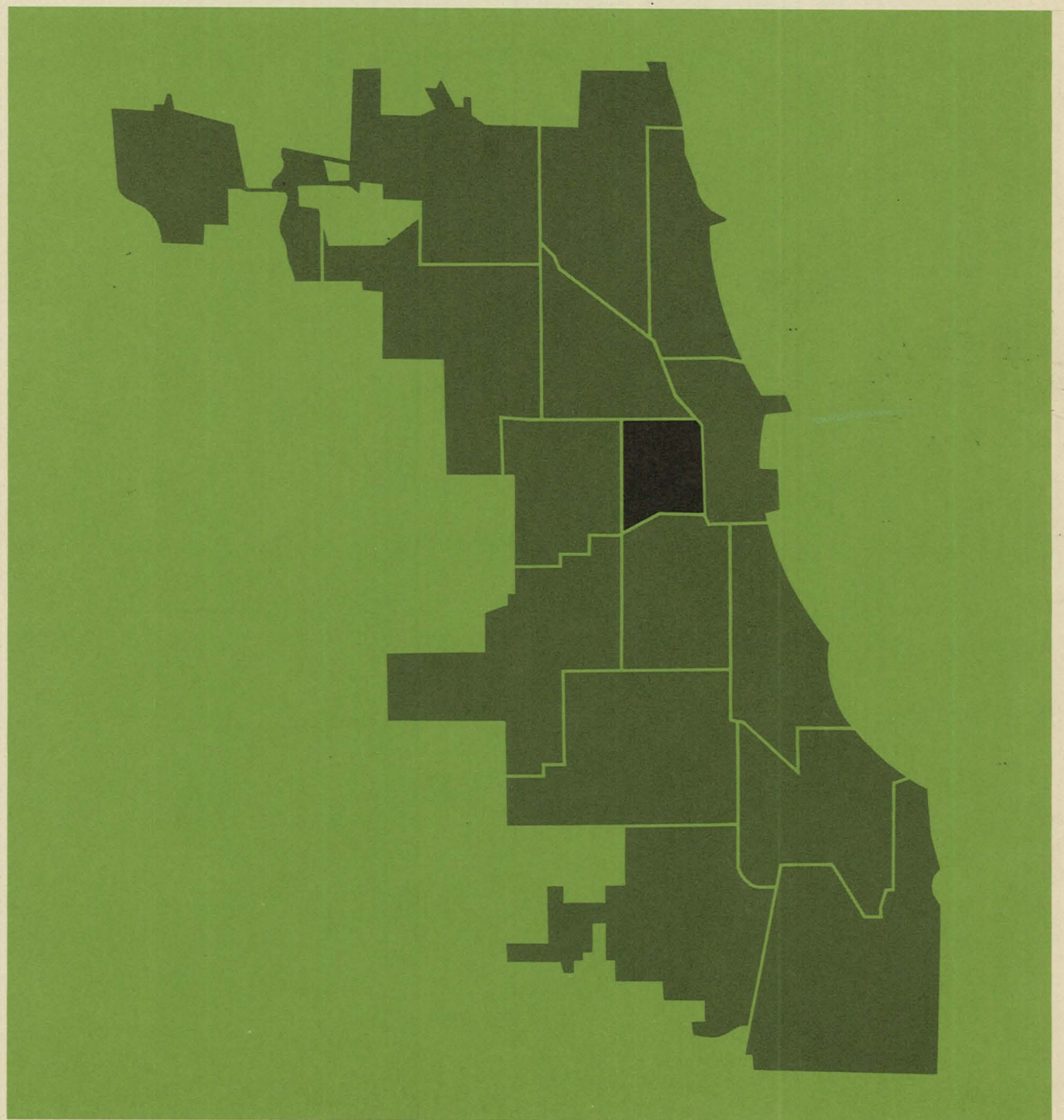


NEAR WEST

DEVELOPMENT AREA

Department of Development and Planning



City of Chicago, Richard J. Daley, Mayor

Near West Development Area

City of Chicago, Richard J. Daley, Mayor

John G. Duba, Commissioner of Development and Planning

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PURPOSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT AREA REPORTS

In order to relate long-term basic policies to contemporary needs and varied conditions, a continuing process is required for formulating and refining plans and programs for Chicago communities. Planning, programming, and the actual construction of new homes, factories, transit, and other facilities are all parts of a complex process of decision-making which can be coordinated best by sub-sections of the city.

A series of reports on specific areas of the city has been prepared to initiate discussion of issues, problems, and possible solutions. This discussion will lead to more detailed policies and programs to help government and citizens coordinate their activities and achieve their goals more effectively. There are 16 Development Areas, covering the entire city, each with a population of 150,000 to 250,000 and with a land area of 6 to 20 square miles. Each report recommends, in more specific terms, land use changes, residential and industrial improvements, and transportation improvements needed to achieve the policies of the Comprehensive Plan in that area.

Coordinating Development

The various kinds of projects that the city undertakes—street improvements, new schools and parks, urban renewal, and the human relations and community action programs—need to be related to each other if they are to produce maximum benefits for the communities they serve. In other words, the best way to improve the city is not on a project-by-project basis but in accordance with an over-all, coordinated program that assures the proper time and location for each item.

Chicago is too large to deal with as a whole in scheduling specific projects. Area plan and General Neighborhood Renewal Plan experience has demonstrated the need for an intermediate step between the level of the total city and the level of the specific project. The boundaries of the Development Areas are drawn to provide a practical means of dividing up the city for planning purposes. There is enough detail which residents can readily recognize so that the scale of the area facilitates effective citizen participation. The Development Areas offer a means for citizens and government officials to discuss planning objec-

tives, proposals, and improvement programs, so that varying viewpoints can be considered before final decisions are made about specific projects.

The recommendations in the Development Area reports are ideas and suggested projects for consideration. They do not represent final plans for the areas, nor do they cover all the issues that will have to be dealt with. The reports recognize that not all planning problems have immediate solutions. In some cases questions are raised for which answers have not been determined, in the expectation that the best solution will evolve through discussion.

In this report, the statements of objectives and programs for the Development Area are limited to the more evident community facility, transportation, renewal, and institutional needs and opportunities. Through community discussion and continuing research, additional objectives and program approaches will be identified and developed. These will include specific proposals for coordinating park, school, and traffic facilities and for relating industrial and business district improvements to urban renewal and transportation projects.

Of special importance will be the identification of community social needs and the evaluation of alternative programs of facilities and activities. In some areas, private institutions may cooperate or new privately sponsored activities may be established to achieve major educational, recreational, or health objectives. In other areas, public agencies such as the Board of Education or Chicago Park District may modify their programs or start new services to expand opportunity for individuals and families.

Steps in the Review Process

Several specific steps will be followed in reviewing and revising the Development Area reports:

—Each Development Area report will be distributed to civic organizations and other private groups, both within the local area and city-wide. Citizen participation in Development Area planning will be an essential objective.

—City representatives will meet with groups and elected officials with an interest in each area to

discuss the preliminary findings and proposals of the report. Findings will be modified, other ideas sought, and approaches to resolving issues will be explored.

—Appropriate revisions in the proposals will then be made, which will result in a planning framework for the Development Area. After public discussion, the report would be adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission as a policy guide in review of projects and programs for the area.

—Using the planning framework as a guide the department will work with the agencies involved to meet the area's critical needs and achieve local objectives by adjustment of programs and scheduling of projects. This will be a continuing process requiring the maintenance of communications and the revision of programs as administrative and staff capabilities are improved.

From Plans to Action

Chicago is constantly changing. Therefore, from time to time, each planning framework will be amended to reflect new needs or changes in objectives as a result of continuing study and discussion.

In recent years new transportation facilities, urban renewal, and other public and private developments have greatly improved the city's appearance, livability, and opportunities. Other projects are under way or planned. Still greater effort and change will be necessary if Chicago is to meet its commitment to the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. In the coming years sections of the city must be rebuilt or rehabilitated to meet high expectations for living standards. New ways must be found for dealing with related social problems and for broadening opportunities for all Chicagoans.

The Development Area reports have been prepared to inform Chicago citizens what the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations mean to each locality, to provide a means whereby city officials exchange information with citizens about the needs of their communities, and to develop a cooperative planning procedure. Achieving the kind of city envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan will call for the ideas, the widespread support, and the involvement of the people of Chicago.

NEAR WEST DEVELOPMENT AREA

Within the Near West Development Area are the new Chicago Circle Campus of the University of Illinois and the major facilities of the Medical Center District. Both the university and the Medical Center will be of increasing economic and social importance to the city, and particularly to this area.

The Near West Development Area's proximity to the Central Business District and to the city's main expressway interchange at Chicago Circle makes it an excellent location for institutions and industry, as well as for housing. However, parts of the Development Area contain some of the oldest buildings in Chicago. Over-all, the area has more than the average proportion of residential blight, obsolete industrial buildings, adverse mixtures of land use, inadequate community facilities, and insufficient open space.

Historically, the availability of major transportation routes has encouraged concentrations of industry and commerce in the Development Area, especially along the North Western and Burlington railroads. The earliest industrial developments were along the Chicago River, where today fuel depots and lumber yards continue to operate. About one-third of the entire Development Area is now devoted to industrial and other non-residential uses.

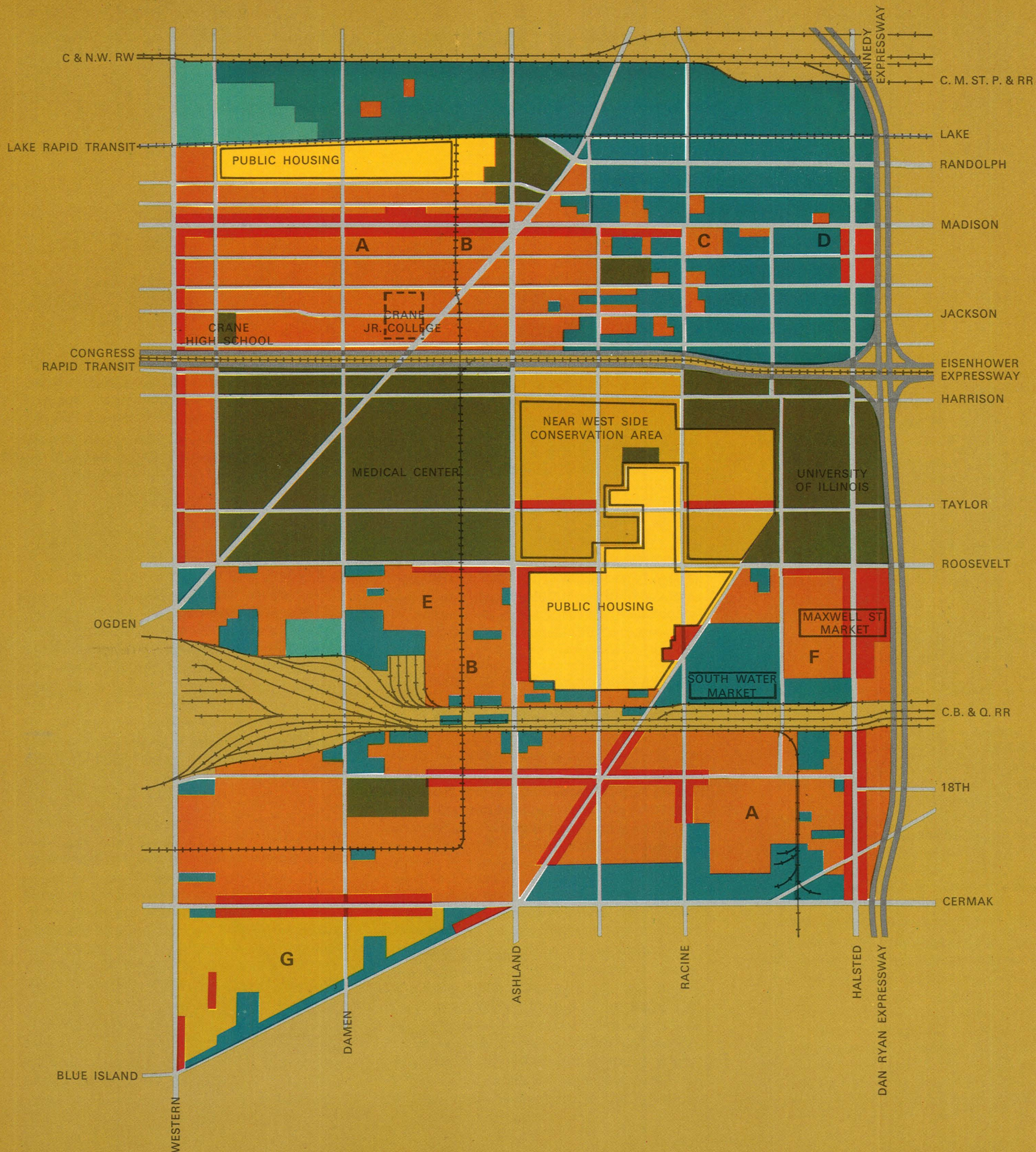
The early residential growth was, for the most part, directly related to the opportunity to earn a living nearby and was held to a fairly low density. But subsequent conversions resulted in overcrowding, a condition that remains today. Many structures built before the turn of the century are still in use. Much of the housing in the Near West Development Area shows extensive signs of blight and deterioration, except in certain areas where the rate of home ownership is high or where redevelopment has

taken place. Another problem lies in fragmentation: the separation of residential blocks from each other in unrelated patterns by an equally fragmented industrial or commercial pattern. Some of the groups of residential blocks thus formed are too small to support an adequate range of community facilities.

Public and semi-public improvement programs covering approximately 1,000 acres, or more than 25 per cent of the Development Area, have eliminated residential blight and provided land for new housing, institutions, and industries. These programs have established a firm foundation for future development.

Because of the Near West Development Area's proximity to rapid transit, expressways, and the Central Business District, the Comprehensive Plan of Chicago recommends high-density residential use for large portions of the area. This policy has been reflected in urban renewal and public housing developments designed to accommodate large numbers of people and to provide adequate open space, community facilities, and business centers. In recent years the development of major institutions in the area has strengthened the need for high-density housing nearby.

It will be necessary to recognize and support the strong sense of community within the residential sections as well as to provide for further development of the major institutions and the improvement of industrial areas. The Development Area should consist of a number of residential neighborhoods of varying densities related to institutional areas, conveniently linked by commonly shared park-malls and community facilities. The institutions and industries should be developed as organized districts effectively related to the transportation network.



Characteristics Near West Development Area

Public or Institutional Use	
Residence in Good Condition	
Residence in Need of Some Improvement	
Residence in Need of Major Repair	
Business Concentrations	
Industry in Good Condition	
Industry in Need of Some Improvement	

A Serious Housing and Environmental Problems

B Elevated Structure a Blighting Influence

C Scattered Residential Blight

D Skid Row

E Blighted Area

F Urban Renewal Project Area

G Good Housing with Some
Environmental Problems

Objectives

Long-range planning objectives for the Near West Development Area include the following:

1. Improve the residential environment by eliminating substandard housing through rehabilitation and redevelopment. Insure continued improvement by providing programs for landlords and tenants that will enable and encourage them to adopt and maintain high standards of neighborhood maintenance.
2. Develop schools, parks, and other community facilities as a system that can meet the needs of both the present and future populations of the area. Maximum potential can be attained through the development of park-malls which contain these facilities and relate to the residential areas by landscaped walkways.
3. Provide clear guidelines for the future expansion of major institutions within the area. Orient housing, services, and facilities in nearby areas so that there can be maximum compatibility with these institutions.
4. Develop industrial concentrations that meet foreseeable standards, and provide land for the development of new industries as well as the expansion of existing plants in appropriate locations. Devise programs to relocate scattered and poorly located industry from residential areas into areas of industrial concentration.
5. Develop modern, attractive business centers which will serve existing and proposed residential areas and permit the removal of excessive commercial frontage. Because the Near West Development Area is close to the Central Business District, regional shopping and commercial services of the highest order are readily accessible.
6. Improve public transportation and selected major streets to facilitate the movement of heavy traffic volumes through the Development Area to and from the Loop in a manner that will reduce disruption of activities within the area.
7. Provide opportunities for residents to participate in programs for improvement of the environment and for the elimination of existing and emerging social problems.

Existing Conditions and Recommendations

Residence

In 1960 there were 158,000 persons living in the Near West Development Area, representing a broad cross-section of racial, ethnic, social, and economic groups. Among the elements of this population are low-income residents in both public and private housing, professionals employed by the major institutions of the area, individuals living on the Madison Street "skid row," and the skilled and semi-skilled residents in the south section of the area.

By census tract the percentage of the population under 18 years of age ranges from 27 to 57. Thus the current need for schools serving the residential sections differs considerably from tract to tract. Similarly, the percentage of persons age 65 and over ranges from 3 to 12, and therefore the need for community facilities for the elderly also varies among census tracts.

The census figures on income and employment also demonstrate the heterogeneous

nature of the Near West Development Area population.

FACTOR	RANGE BY CENSUS TRACT
Median family income . . .	\$2,450 to \$6,190
Per cent with family incomes less than \$3,000	9.9 to 59.1%
Per cent with family incomes of \$10,000 or more	0.7 to 19.1%
Per cent male labor force unemployed	3.0 to 20.6%
Per cent male white collar worker	6.5 to 49.3%

The population has been extremely mobile in some areas (as much as 80 per cent of the 1960 population in one census tract having lived in a different house in 1955) and fairly stable in other areas (65 per cent of another census tract having lived in the same house in 1955).

According to the *Local Community Fact Book, 1960*, the Near West Side Community Area (which includes much of the Near West Development Area) had a death rate 75 per cent higher than the rate for the total population of Chicago. In addition, this community had 3.3 unemployment compensation beneficiaries per 100 persons in the labor force, as compared to a rate of 1.7 for the city as a whole. The Development Area's rate of public assistance recipients was 24.7 per 100 population, compared to the city rate of 7.7. Its rate of admissions to mental institutions was the second highest in the city, as was its rate of juvenile delinquency.

This Development Area contained nearly 49,000 housing units in 1960; 43 per cent of these units were considered substandard because of factors ranging from minor plumbing deficiencies to unsafe conditions. Twenty-two per cent of the units were considered overcrowded (having an occupancy of more than one person per room).

Again the census figures on housing demonstrate the varied character of housing in the several sections of the Near West Development Area.

FACTOR	RANGE BY CENSUS TRACT
Per cent owner-occupied	1 to 28%
Per cent substandard housing . . .	4 to 97%
Per cent overcrowding (more than 1 person/room)	13 to 42%

Some of the land now occupied by dilapi-

dated housing should be redeveloped in non-residential uses. For example, much of the area bounded by Roosevelt Road, 16th Street, Blue Island Avenue, and the Dan Ryan Expressway is now occupied by housing that comprises some of the worst in the city. It is generally beyond rehabilitation, and the only appropriate solution is redevelopment. An application has been submitted to reserve federal funds for a redevelopment project in this area. Appropriate uses would include institutional facilities which are needed to support the university, a new business center, light industry, and housing. The Maxwell Street market, which has served a unique function for many years, must be more adequately and safely housed and operated. The future of the South Water Market produce terminal, also located in this area, is discussed in the Food Wholesaling section which follows.

The Near West Development Area needs more than just a sound physical plant with improved residential communities served by modern schools and good recreational facilities. Social, medical, and vocational services and facilities are required. Child guidance centers, family services, and employment and vocational guidance centers are used by all segments of the population as particular needs arise. Some needs—such as public health and medical care, family service and assistance, legal aid and advice, and organized recreation—are common to all segments of the population. But the form such services take should vary. For example, some parts of the Near West Development Area need clinics and dispensaries in addition to facilities for private medical practitioners. In other sections, more emphasis should be placed on programs such as delinquency prevention, services for the handicapped, social rehabilitation, and consumer counseling which are designed for specific population groups. Close coordination of all social services should be an integral part of a comprehensive plan of action for the Near West Development Area. As a first step, a thorough analysis must be undertaken to determine where and to what extent these services and facilities are and should be provided.

Three sections recommended for residential use and improvement extend through the Near West Development Area from north to south.

The Chicago Housing Authority's Henry Horner Homes, in the Near West Development Area. These buildings contain bi-level apartments, which have proven highly successful for large families.



North

A substantial portion of the entire Development Area's substandard housing is in the area bounded by Lake Street on the north, Racine Avenue on the east, the Eisenhower Expressway on the south, and Western Avenue on the west. Housing conditions are poor throughout the area. The Henry Horner public housing project, while in good physical condition, does not escape the influence of the surrounding environment. The north section also has problems of mixed land use, inadequate open space, and traffic congestion on almost all of the east-west streets.

Wherever possible, improvement activities should be designed to preserve fine old homes and other buildings of historic and architectural value. But, in general, substantial redevelopment will be needed to achieve Comprehensive Plan standards for the area. The Chicago Dwellings Association has a current program to develop approximately 100 cooperative, 221(d)(3)-financed town houses as part of the Washington-Hermitage Urban Renewal Project.

The Madison Street "skid row"—a portion of which is in this section of the Near West Development Area—presents a special problem. Rehabilitation programs for the indigent, special relocation techniques, and housing for low-income single persons could establish a base point for solving social problems in "skid row."

Plans for rebuilding the north section should provide the following: high-density housing near the expressway and rapid transit stops and lower-density housing elsewhere; a major neighborhood business center combining shopping and community facilities near Madison and Ashland; a reduction in the number of major east-west streets; and the closing or reduction of Ogden Avenue to a local street. There should be more recreational space, especially to serve schools; and landscaped walkways should extend through much of the residential area. The park-walkway network should connect with pedestrian overpasses at the Eisenhower Expressway, providing linkage with institutional and residential areas to the south in the central section.

Two areas are recommended for early study: the area along the expressway and the Madison-Ashland business center, including the Chicago Stadium area.



Central

This section is bounded by the Eisenhower Expressway on the north, Morgan and Blue Island avenues on the east, the 16th Street railroad embankment on the south, and Ashland Avenue on the west. Much of the area has been, or is being, rebuilt with housing and related facilities in keeping with the recommended high-density character of the Near West Development Area. The section includes the Addams-Abbott-Brooks-Loomis public housing complex, the Near West Side Conservation Area, and the Congress-Racine Redevelopment Project.

In accordance with the approved plan for the 185-acre Near West Side Conservation Area, between the University of Illinois and the Medical Center District, 65 per cent of the structures will be rehabilitated. Low-density housing will be built on 75 per cent of the cleared land allocated for residential re-use, and the rest will be used for medium and high-density housing. The area is now being improved and is becoming an attractive place of residence for the people of this community as well as Medical Center and University of Illinois personnel. The rate of rehabilitation is expected to increase.

The Congress-Racine Redevelopment Project, now well under way, will remove a strip of industry from the area south of the Eisenhower Expressway and east of Ashland Avenue. Cleared land east of Racine has been sold to the University of Illinois. The remaining land to the west will be used to create a new high-density residential development of row houses, walk-ups, and high-rise apartments.

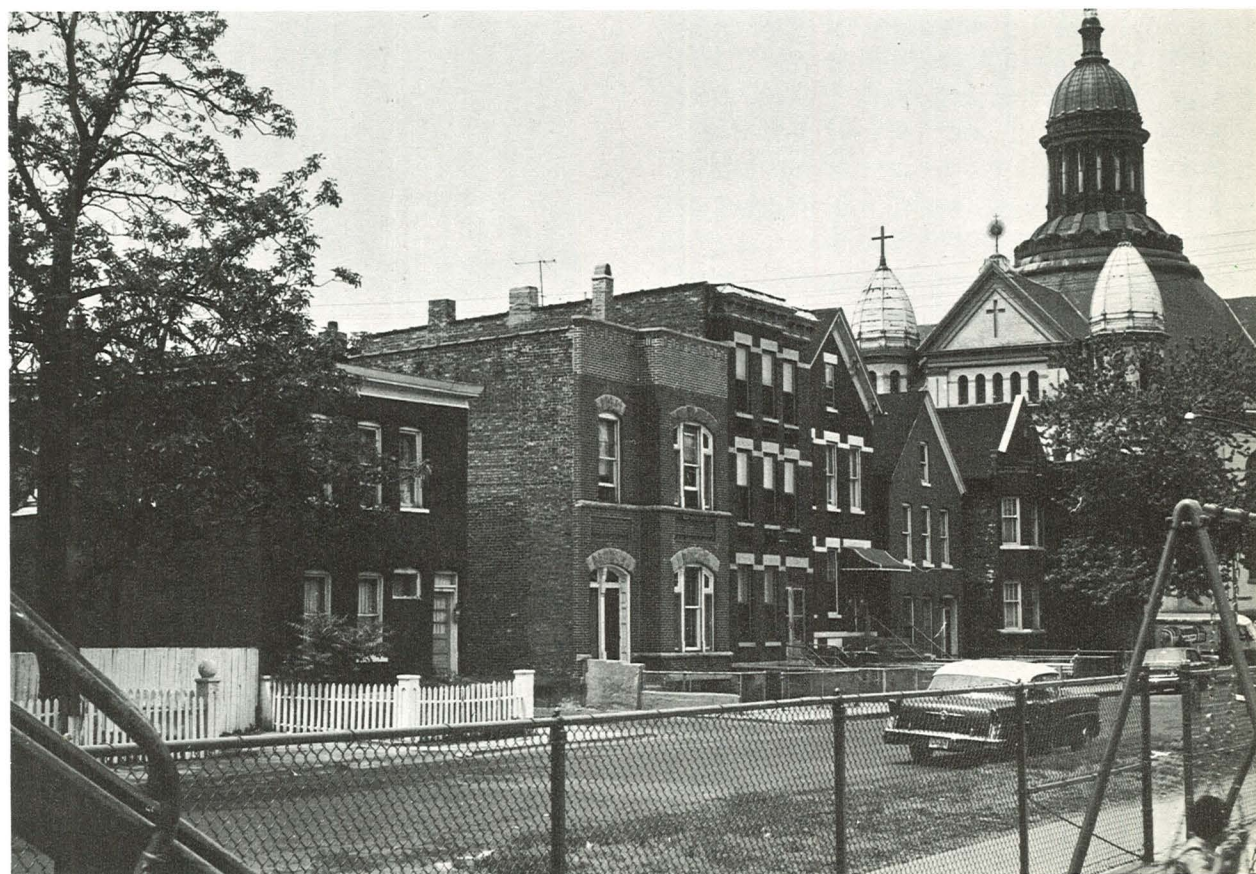
Immediately west of the central section, new housing has been provided in the Medical Center District primarily for center personnel. This housing ranges from a dormitory type to the Chicago Dwellings Association's 306-unit high-rise apartment structure at Ogden and Damen.

This sketch illustrates how a typical older residential section, in the Near West area could be developed. Some housing has been rehabilitated, while other units are new. Through vehicular traffic has been eliminated, and landscaped walkways connect housing with parks, schools, shopping, and other community facilities.



A recreation area with play sculpture in the Chicago Housing Authority Jane Addams Houses, northwest of Roosevelt Road and Racine Avenue. These town houses and walk-up apartments, the first publicly sponsored housing development in Chicago, were completed in 1938.

Rehabilitated residential buildings in the Near West Side Conservation Project, part of the Near West Development Area. As part of this improvement program, homes up to 80 years old have been brought up to rehabilitation standards. Parks and playgrounds are being improved and expanded.





Vernon Park has been expanded and a pedestrian greenway system developed as part of the Near West Side Conservation Area. Other parts of the Development Area are seriously deficient in park space and need similar improvements.

South

The residential community south of 16th Street is generally in better condition than other unrenewed sections of the Near West Development Area. Still, of the 15,700 housing units in the community, 37 per cent were substandard and 14 per cent overcrowded in 1960. Home ownership, however, is relatively high with 23 per cent of all units owner-occupied in 1960.

The community has long faced problems of mixed land use and isolation from surrounding residential areas. The section east of Ashland Avenue is particularly confined by the Dan Ryan Expressway to the east, industry to the south, and railroads to the north.

Some renewal treatment will be needed to achieve residential standards called for in the Comprehensive Plan. In the section east of Ashland Avenue, action should be taken to curtail industrial expansion north of Cermak Road. A greenway buffer connecting with Dvorak Park should be developed to separate the industrial and residential sections. Needed community facilities must be provided as public and private renewal takes place.



Homes along 18th Street in the south section of the Development Area. There are many 70 to 80-year-old residential buildings in this area, where there has been relatively little new construction since 1930. A conservation-rehabilitation program here, similar to the Near West Side Conservation Project, would help to make the community more attractive and livable.

Recreation

The Near West Development Area is badly in need of additional recreation space. Less than 0.5 acre per 1,000 residents currently exists. Of the Development Area's nearly 3,600 acres, only about 60 acres, or two per cent of the total, are devoted to public open space. Virtually all the public schools have inadequate playground space.

There are only three parks in the section north of the Eisenhower Expressway—the 17.4-acre Union Park, the 4.3-acre Touhy Park, and the 7.3-acre park adjacent to Skinner School. Washington Boulevard cuts through Union Park and considerably reduces its usable area. To the south, between the expressway and Roosevelt Road, are Vernon and Sheridan parks with a total of 9.7 acres. Five acres of recreation area will be added as part of the Near West Side Conservation Area, including the expansion of Vernon Park and the development of a neighborhood park between Flornoy and Polk. In the south section, the 3.9-acre Dvorak Park is well equipped, but industry occupies much of the surrounding area, making it less accessible to residents. Harrison Park with 17.4 acres is generally well-equipped for formal organized recreation, although it is poorly landscaped.

In areas with significant social problems, the need for intensively developed recreational facilities and programs under the supervision of trained personnel is even more pressing than the need for open space. Examples of planned programs are those offered by YMCA's and Boys' Clubs. However, appropriate emphasis must be placed upon the development of open space and parks. A network of parks, park-malls, and landscaped walkways is recommended for the Near West Development Area to provide needed recreational and open space, to serve schools, to separate industrial and residential areas, and to create pedestrian links between residential areas. Three activity centers—each with field house facilities, swimming pool, and meeting rooms—are recommended. It is especially important to provide recreational facilities in the Development Area, since it tends to be isolated from other parts of the city where major parks and beaches are now available. In addition to the many playgrounds proposed, some of which will be adjacent to existing schools, other recreational facilities can be developed as part of urban renewal

and other local improvement programs.

Schools

Improvements are required for many Near West Development Area schools because of obsolescence and, in some cases, overcrowding of both site and structure.

Twenty of the elementary schools were entirely or partially built more than 50 years ago and presently require either rehabilitation or in some cases replacement. Moreover, according to 1965 Board of Education data, 27 of the 28 elementary schools in the Near West Development Area have average class sizes greater than 30 pupils per room, the goal set by the board. Some 61 additional classrooms would be required to meet this objective for the present school population.

Improvements are also needed at the high school level. The Near West Development Area is now served by Crane High School at the western edge of the area and by two branch high schools, Jackson and Froebel. Jackson was built before 1900, and Froebel is more than 50 years old.

Open space should be provided adjacent to Crane High School, which has no outdoor recreational facilities. Sites for new high schools, elementary schools, and the additional recreation space needed to serve existing schools could be provided as part of renewal programs. For example, St. Ignatius, a Roman Catholic high school, has already begun its expansion program as part of the Near West Side Conservation Area.

Institutions

Two institutional complexes of major importance to the entire Chicago metropolitan area—the University of Illinois Chicago Circle Campus and the Medical Center District—provide a core for economic and physical development in the Near West Development Area.

The University of Illinois, which opened in February 1965, is built on land cleared by the Department of Urban Renewal. The 105-acre campus is bounded by the Eisenhower Expressway on the north, the Dan Ryan Expressway on the east, Roosevelt Road on the south, and Racine Avenue and the Near West Side Conservation Area on the west. The university's enrollment is eventually expected to exceed the original target

of 20,000 students. Between 2,000 and 3,000 faculty and staff members will be employed. The presence of the university has already encouraged rehabilitation and the construction of new housing in the Near West Side Conservation Area.

In the near future, the university will require additional land for new facilities. A substantial portion of the land needed for this expansion should be provided by the redevelopment project recommended for the Roosevelt-Halsted area immediately south of the present campus. It may also be necessary to consider additional university expansion north of the Eisenhower Expressway and east of Racine, along with other possible uses in this area.

The 305-acre Medical Center District is bounded by the Eisenhower Expressway, Ashland Avenue, Roosevelt Road, and Oakley Boulevard. In 1941 the Illinois Legislature established the Illinois Medical Center Commission. It has the power to clear land in the district assigned and make it available for the expansion and improvement of existing medical institutions, for new institutions, and for additional related facilities.

The Medical Center now contains 83 buildings, and there are current plans to add 13 more. Deficient housing that remains within this complex is being removed by the Medical Center Commission as new medical facilities are constructed. Some of the new buildings provide living quarters for students and staff.

The Department of Development and Planning is now working with the Medical Center Commission in preparing a plan for future development. It is necessary to devise a program that will stress a planned relationship among the buildings and open spaces both in and around the district. Many important policy questions affecting the entire Near West area, including the extent to which the Medical Center must be expanded beyond its present boundaries, depend upon the adoption of such a long-range development program.

Compactness of development and the proper arrangement of land uses should be emphasized in order to maintain and strengthen the district's value as a group of interrelated institutions. Should it be proven after full utilization of the present district site that additional land is needed

for the Medical Center, consideration should be given to the area between Oakley and Western or to very limited areas south of Roosevelt Road.

A five-acre site bounded by Jackson, Wood, Van Buren, and Wolcott is currently proposed for the new Crane Junior College campus. Presently, the college is inadequately housed in the same structure containing Crane High School. The proposed site, adjacent to the Eisenhower Expressway and the rapid transit stop at Damen Avenue, is in an area warranting redevelopment. Ultimately, the campus may be expanded to 20 acres and could become the focal point of a community center extending from the Chicago Stadium and the commercial concentration at Madison and Ashland on the north to the Medical Center District on the south.

The Near West Development Area presently lacks permanent branch library facilities. A sub-branch in rented space serves the south sector. It should eventually be replaced with a permanent structure to be located in the proposed business center in the vicinity of 18th and Blue Island. The north and central sectors, now served by mobile library units, are in immediate need of full library services.

Business

Consolidated and improved business facilities are needed to expand the service level in the Near West Development Area. Many blocks of store fronts should eventually be removed, but in some cases it would be neither desirable nor possible to do so at an early date. For example, shopping facilities along 18th Street and along parts of Cermak Road would be retained largely in their present form in the immediate future, because of their structural condition and community support for their use.

In the northern section of the Near West Development Area, the heaviest concentration of retail activity lies along Madison Street. In this area the store front vacancy rate is quite high, which both reflects and contributes to the deterioration of adjacent residential areas. For example, some of the Madison Street store fronts have been converted to poor-quality residential use. It is recommended that a major neighborhood business center be developed near Madison and Ashland as part of the city's effort to renew the northern section. Planning and

design for this center should take maximum advantage of mutually supportive relationships with Union Park to the north and the Chicago Stadium to the west. Further to the west, and more specifically oriented to local residential areas, a smaller neighborhood-level business center is recommended at Madison and Western.

In the central section of the Near West Development Area business activities are concentrated in the Roosevelt-Halsted-Maxwell Street complex of stores. An improved business center is recommended as part of the redevelopment proposed for the immediate area. South of Roosevelt is the well-known Maxwell Street open-air market. New facilities for this market might be provided in conjunction with an improved business center. However, it will be necessary to analyze carefully the future need for such an open-air market and its place in the rebuilt business center at Roosevelt and Halsted.

A small neighborhood retail center should also be considered at the northwest corner of Harrison and Racine to serve the university, the Near West Side Conservation Area, and the Medical Center. The business center could be constructed as part of the Congress-Racine Redevelopment Project. Other business improvements that should be considered are the removal of deteriorated commercial frontage near the intersection of Ashland Avenue and Roosevelt Road and the establishment of a neighborhood center west of Ashland at Roosevelt. In the south section of the area, the retail services at the intersection of Loomis and Blue Island avenues and 18th Street are a potential nucleus for gradual development as a modern business center.

In addition to the neighborhood business centers, there will be a need for convenience goods retail clusters, similar to the new center at 13th and Blue Island, throughout the Near West residential areas.

Industry

Industry has been attracted to the Near West area because of its proximity to the Central Business District and the presence of extensive major transportation routes. The maintenance and expansion of this industry is important to the city's economy. However, significant improvements will be needed since many manufacturing plants are technologically obsolete or physically



In the south section of the Development Area, a mixture of industrial and residential buildings has had an adverse effect on housing quality. Trucks and heavy traffic congest local streets and disrupt the neighborhood.



Buildings such as these in the northern part of the Near West Development Area provide low-rent space for "incubator" industries. Remodeling or replacement could increase the desirability of these centrally located industrial properties.

deteriorated. Those industries which have a high nuisance level or a very low level of land utilization relative to employment density should be encouraged to relocate to less valuable industrial areas.

There are three sections of industrial importance in the Near West Development Area. The south section, which is mainly a residential community, contains scattered industrial groupings in areas recommended for residential re-use, as well as other substantial industrial developments. Conversely, the Lake Street and Roosevelt Road sections are currently characterized by extensive industrial uses throughout and are therefore recommended for maintenance as major industrial concentrations.

South Section

There is some scattered industry in Near West areas where residential use is recommended. Particularly in the south section of the Development Area, the generally depreciating effect both uses have on each other should be remedied. Industry just south of the 16th Street railway embankment and scattered throughout the residential communities to the south is not in good condition and produces serious air pollution problems in the area. Industries have pushed into the southern residential sections of the Development Area from the industrial concentration lying between Cermak Road-Blue Island Avenue and the South Branch of the Chicago River. It is recommended that any industrial programs in this general area concentrate development south of Cermak-Blue Island.

Lake Street

This section spans the entire northern boundary of the Near West Development Area between the Chicago and North Western Railway tracks and Lake Street. It extends south to Randolph Street in the portion east of Ashland Avenue. There is already a substantial concentration of industry here. Land for new industrial development has been made available by the Department of Urban Renewal's 29-acre Lake-Maplewood Project, part of which extends into the Lake Street industrial area. But many of the structures in other parts of the area are not suitable for modern industry. The study of industrial obsolescence conducted by the IIT-Research Institute for the Community Renewal Program indicated that, in 1962, 63 per cent of all industrial structures

in the Near West Side industrial district (which includes the Lake Street area) were "unsuitable or inadequate for most industrial purposes." In addition, problems confronting this industrial area include lack of adequate off-street parking and loading and the existence of deteriorated housing scattered throughout the area.

This entire industrial area exhibits the principal characteristics of an industrial corridor as proposed in the Comprehensive Plan. The eastern portion offers an excellent potential for a concentration of plants and commercial activities with service relationships to the Central Business District. For example, the entire section east of Racine Avenue is recommended for early attention to provide opportunities for an industrial development, possible expansion of the University of Illinois campus, and the possible location of a municipal sports center. Some of the land could be made available through the relocation of the Fulton Street and Randolph Street markets. Because the residential structures remaining in the area are widely scattered, principal reliance can be placed on the Building Department's demolition program to eliminate those that are in dangerous condition. However, there are some pockets of residential blight north of Lake Street that are of sufficient size to warrant urban renewal treatment. Such a program could be similar to the Lake-Maplewood and Lake-California projects, which have provided land for new industrial buildings, plant expansion, and off-street parking.

Roosevelt Road

The second area recommended for industrial maintenance and development is south of Roosevelt Road between Ashland and Western avenues. Much of this area is currently occupied by badly deteriorated residential structures, in which 65 per cent of all dwelling units showed major code violations in a recent Department of Buildings survey.

On the other hand, this is an area where industrial expansion has been occurring. One company which recently acquired and cleared two full blocks offers an example of the type of unassisted expansion that should be encouraged. However, because of the size of the area suggested for industrial use, the extent of existing blight, and the need to coordinate development with the Medical Center program, complete re-

An example of private industrial renewal. This firm purchased an adjacent block of deficient housing and redeveloped it as a lighted, fenced, and landscaped employee parking lot. Space formerly used for parking could then be used for additions to the plant. Investments such as this demonstrate the desirability and potential of Near West industrial areas.



development to achieve a modern urban industrial park will undoubtedly depend upon public renewal action.

Prime opportunities for industrial development exist because of the presence of a core of healthy industry, rail transportation, and efficient vehicular access by Western Avenue and Roosevelt Road. A well-organized industrial concentration can therefore be developed in the area bounded by the rail lines to the south, the Medical Center to the north, and the major streets to the east and west. In addition, redevelopment for industry would agree with city-wide Comprehensive Plan policies, would encourage the current trend toward industrial expansion, and would help strengthen the city's tax base.

Food Wholesaling

The Near West Development Area is the site of a large share of the city's food wholesaling activities.

The 60-acre potato and onion terminal operated by the North Western Railway runs along the 16th Street railway embankment between Damen and Western avenues. It is well laid out for contemporary operations and capable of functioning adequately for some years to come. However, if other related Near West marketing facilities were to move, the functions of the terminal would be altered.

South Water Market, north of the 16th Street embankment and east of Blue Island Avenue, is Chicago's principal wholesale fruit and vegetable market. The terminal was built as a planned development in 1925, and while it functioned as a model development for many years, its 80 to 90-foot wide on-street loading areas are now too narrow to accommodate modern trailer trucks. Action to rebuild the area south of Roosevelt Road should include the eventual replacement of this market. However, it should remain until a site is established elsewhere in the city, perhaps through the consolidation of food wholesaling activities. Following relocation, the buildings in the market might be rehabilitated and reused for light industrial firms or, if necessary, cleared for new development.

Two other wholesale food markets are in the northeast corner of the Lake Street industrial area. The Fulton Street Market is a distribution center for approximately 75

per cent of the city's supply of meat, fish, and poultry. Immediately to the south is the Randolph Street Market, an outlet for a mixture of meats, dairy products, and produce. Both markets serve an essential function, but building obsolescence, street congestion, and changing distribution patterns make relocation at a more suitable site a matter of pressing concern.

Transportation

Because the main access routes from the west to the Central Business District pass through the Near West Development Area, many east-west streets in the area carry heavy volumes of vehicular traffic. Congestion has been relieved somewhat over the years by the construction of the Eisenhower Expressway and the establishment of one-way street couples. But the area's proximity to the Central Business District generates additional street traffic and requires implementation of the city-wide policy to restrict through traffic to major streets.

Traffic is heaviest on the east-west streets north of the Eisenhower Expressway (Lake, Washington, Randolph, Madison, Warren, and Jackson) which divide this section into narrow, isolated strips. Through traffic on these streets should be consolidated onto two of the streets, possibly Lake and Madison. These streets would be up-graded to primary thoroughfare standards. Other streets may then be limited to collector and service functions, and some may be closed.

Between the Eisenhower Expressway and 16th Street, east-west through traffic is carried almost exclusively by Harrison Street and Roosevelt Road, which should be improved to primary thoroughfare standards.

Residential streets in the community south of 16th Street have relatively low volumes of through traffic because of the community's isolation. Nevertheless, where industry is intermixed with housing, the streets are congested with trucks and workers' automobiles because of inadequate off-street parking and loading facilities.

The relatively light volumes of east-west traffic through the south section use 18th Street and Cermak Road. The former can be retained at its present capacity pending more specific plans for other improvements in the area; however, a jog at the junction of 18th and Halsted streets might require

realignment. When necessary, Cermak Road should be improved to meet primary thoroughfare standards.

North-south through traffic in the Near West Development Area should be confined to Halsted Street and Ashland and Western avenues. Ashland and Western have been at least partially widened through the area, and part of Halsted has been brought to full standard at Chicago Circle. Western Avenue, though already improved, will require further treatment to meet the special needs of the area served, and Racine and Damen should serve as secondary thoroughfares to complete the north-south street system. Ogden Avenue as a diagonal creates pockets of unusable land and results in traffic congestion at key intersections. The elimination of Ogden as a through traffic artery in the Near West Development Area should be accomplished in conjunction with urban renewal projects. A portion of another diagonal street, Blue Island Avenue, has been vacated to make way for the University of Illinois campus, and the remaining right-of-way, from Roosevelt to Cermak roads, should also be closed to through traffic.

The Lake, Congress, and Douglas Park rapid transit routes provide a high level of service for the West Side. However, it is proposed that the Lake Street elevated be relocated to the North Western Railway right-of-way. Removal of the elevated structure will clear the way for the development of Lake Street as a primary thoroughfare. The Douglas Park elevated structure tends to depreciate adjoining residential and institutional buildings. Studies of alternative means should be undertaken for improvement of the relation between this transit line and the area through which it passes.

The Logan Square elevated structure north of the Eisenhower Expressway was abandoned as a passenger line some years ago because of subway improvements, but is still used for the training of new CTA motormen and the transfer of cars between lines. This structure remains a blighting influence, and its removal would contribute to the up-grading of adjacent areas.

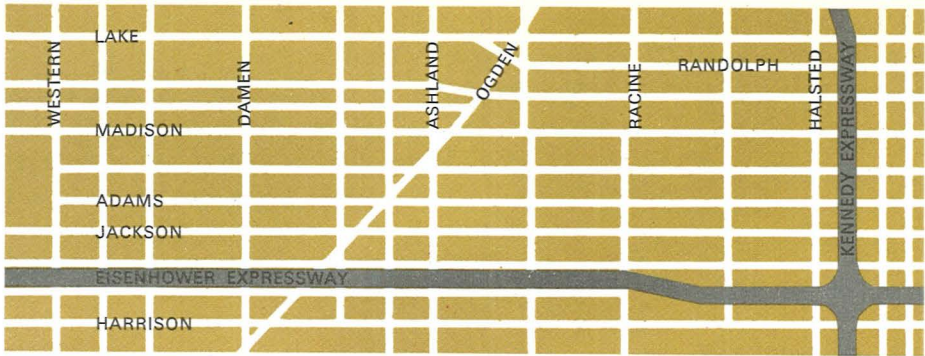
Also recommended is a new rapid transit line along the Western Avenue transportation corridor cited in the Comprehensive Plan. The exact location and design would be studied in connection with improvement of Western Avenue as a primary thoroughfare.

**Street Patterns
in the North Section**

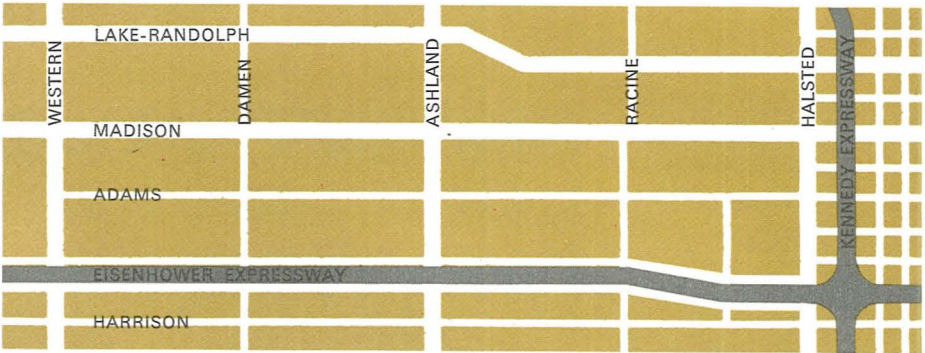
Expressways, rapid transit lines, and major streets make the Near West Development Area highly accessible from all parts of the city and metropolitan area. However, the major streets cutting through the area to the Central Business District fragment the land into strips which do not lend themselves to orderly development.

The north section of the Development Area, shown here, is divided by nine major east-west streets. The existing streets have affected the present environmental patterns in the north section, shown on the facing page. The two alternative revised street patterns shown here would establish a framework for future land use changes.

The alternatives show two of the possible ways in which the street pattern of the north section could be revised in accordance with Comprehensive Plan recommendations. In both cases, the capacity of Madison Street and Randolph-Lake has been increased so that these two routes can now carry the full burden of east-west through traffic north of the Eisenhower Expressway. The major one-mile streets, Halsted, Ashland, and Western, carry the bulk of the north-south traffic. Either Adams Street or Jackson Boulevard, along with the north-south half-mile streets, now serve as distributors and collectors within the large areas defined by the major streets.



Existing



Alternative A

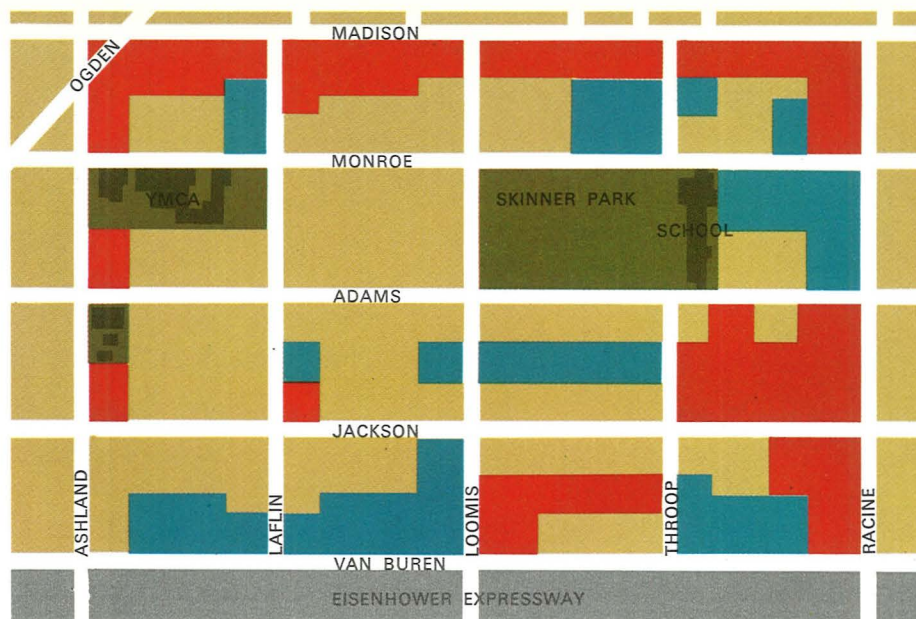
Alternative B



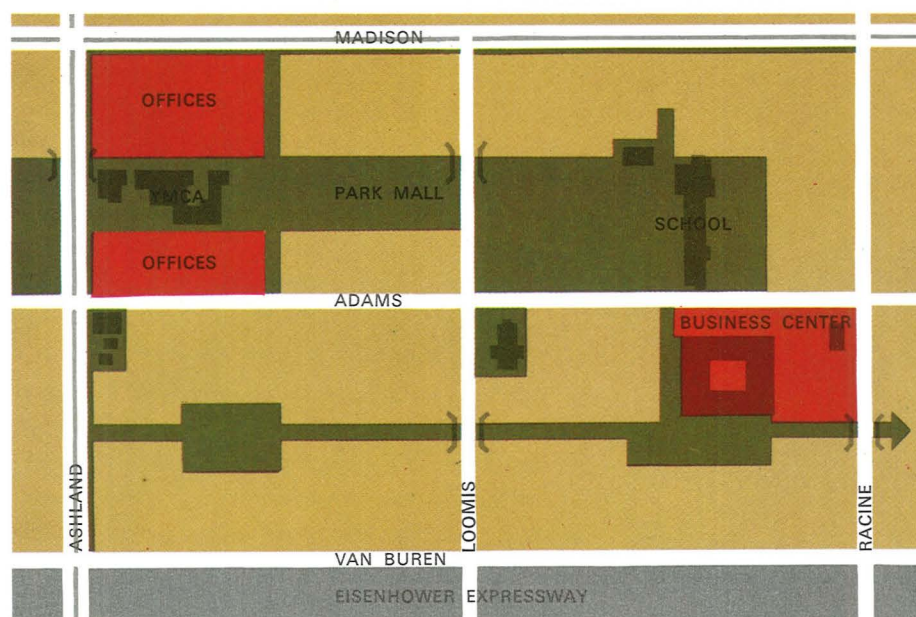
Environmental Patterns in the North Section

The north section of the Development Area has been recommended for rebuilding. Its housing and business structures are deteriorated, industrial and commercial buildings are scattered in residential areas, and it contains a high incidence of social problems. A park, churches, schools, and some sound private buildings provide a potential nucleus for community improvement.

The diagram of existing conditions reflects the excessive number of streets through the area, which have deterred sound development and created traffic hazards. The two alternative revised environmental patterns are related to the two possible street alignment changes shown on the facing page. In both of these revised alternatives, the area has been rebuilt in accordance with Comprehensive Plan recommendations. Deteriorated structures have been removed and unneeded local streets vacated to create a park-mall and walkway system, connecting residential sections with schools, churches, and shopping. Expanded schools, recreation, health facilities, and social services have been provided in or near the area. A reduction in the number of streets has created larger contiguous residential areas and encouraged new housing construction and rehabilitation.

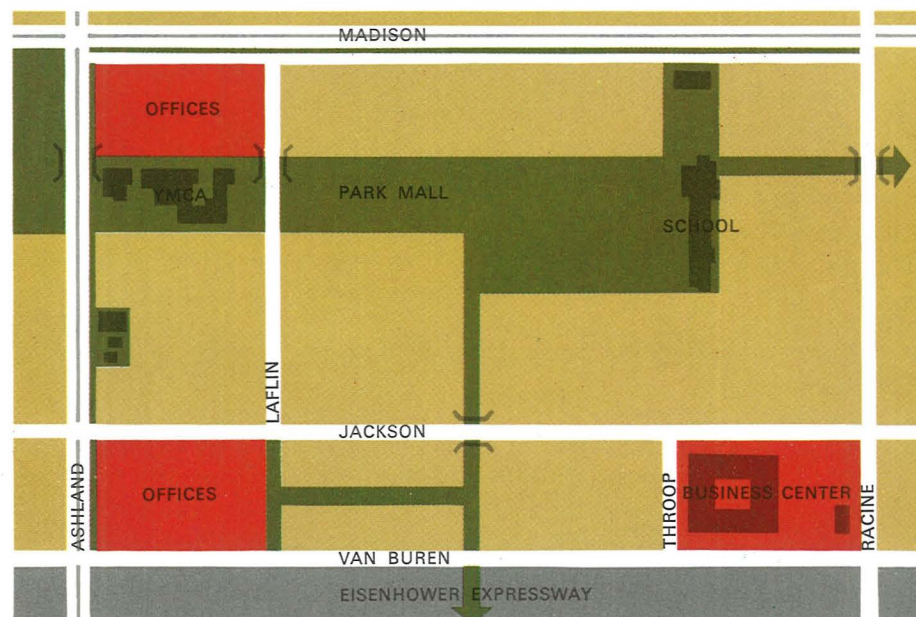


Existing



Alternative A

Alternative B



Existing

Residential

Institutions and Parks

Business

Industry

Summary

The illustration opposite this summary is designed to present an overview of the major concepts identified through the Development Area process at this stage. Through this device it is possible to see how each of these ideas contributes to the design of a total fabric for the Development Area:

A. All three predominantly residential sections of the Near West Development Area, given a new physical base through the redesign of major transportation elements, can become highly viable, moderate to high-density residential areas. There is also a need to strengthen recreational, school, library, and social activity facilities. This may require considerable rebuilding through the concentration of all available public and private programs.

B. The Lake and Douglas branches of the CTA rapid transit system and the proposed Western Avenue line offer the opportunity to combine transit improvements with land use improvements within the Development Area. The Lake line might be relocated to the North Western Railway embankment as has been done at its western end. The Douglas line should be studied to determine ways of providing maximum service with minimum adverse influence upon the general environment.

C. The northern section of the Development Area contains major east-west traffic carriers at almost every block. The resolution of the problems that these streets create lies in the up-grading of both Madison and Lake streets to major street standards. Adams or Jackson should be developed to serve a collector-distributor function within this section of the Development Area.

D. The Medical Center must continue to grow and realize more fully its potential for the city. The primary focus should be on the consolidation of the center within its present boundaries. Further expansion would be limited to Western Avenue on the west, a portion of the area immediately south of Roosevelt Road, or both.

E. The blighted area south of the Medical Center

should be redeveloped. Two potential uses offer the strongest program for the area. Expansion of the core of industry already in this area can be interrelated with limited expansion of the Medical Center, to result in a rebuilding program of maximum value for the city and the area.

F. The south section, containing some of the most stable residential neighborhoods in the Development Area, needs both public and private attention for its maintenance and improvement. While code enforcement is of prime importance, some urban renewal activity, especially east of Ashland Avenue, may be needed. Industrial expansion in the area north of Cermak Road and Blue Island Avenue should be curtailed.

G. The area south of the University of Illinois is slated for redevelopment. This could include light industrial or commercial uses, expansion possibilities for the university and related facilities, and housing. Specific attention is being focused on the South Water Market and the Maxwell Street Market to insure the best resolution of the problems of these two commercial units.

H. The Near West Side Conservation Area, with the support of the institutions and an effective urban renewal program, has proven an excellent example of publicly assisted private rehabilitation and redevelopment. All indications are that the rate of renewal is increasing steadily in the area.

I. The area north of the Eisenhower Expressway and near the central area holds a potential for a combination of uses. The opportunity for industrial redevelopment is strong, the needs of higher educational institutions can be considered, and the location offers a possible site for a city sports center.

J. The concentration of industry north of Lake Street should be reinforced. Urban renewal offers the possibility to redevelop blighted and isolated residential pockets in order to provide land for the expansion of existing industries and the location of new industrial operations.

Planning Framework Near West Development Area

Institution



Residence



Business Center



Industry



A Residential Redevelopment

B Rapid Transit Improvement

C Major Preferential Street Improvement

D Medical Center Development

E Industrial, Business and Institutional Potential

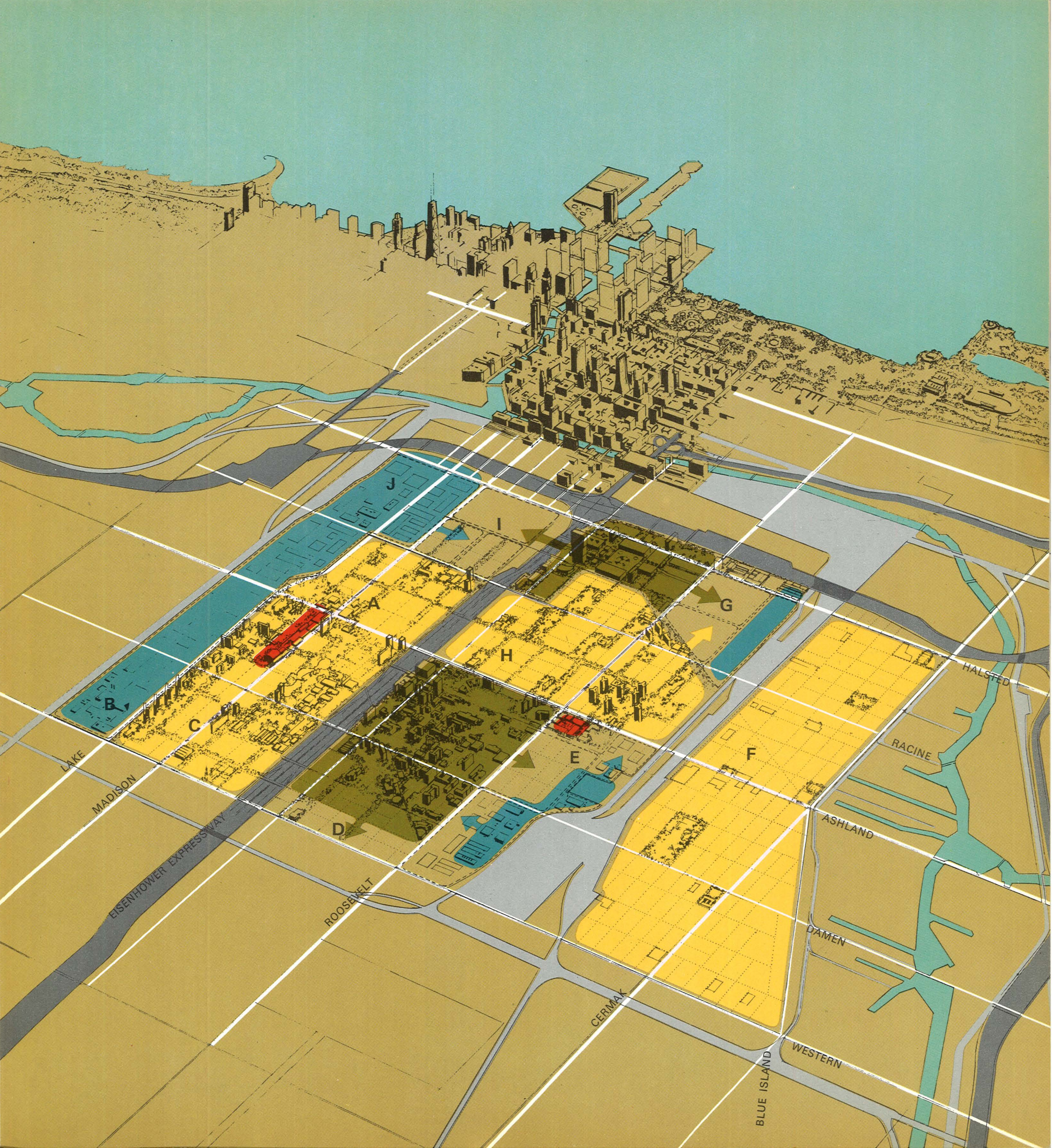
F South Section Housing Improvements

G Industrial, Business and Institutional Potential

H Near West Side Conservation Area

I Industrial, Institutional and Sports Center Potential

J Industrial Renewal



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proposals are reviewed.

